

CERTIFICATION OF TRAINING IN FEDERAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

With the ongoing major changes that are occurring in information technology and in Federal recordkeeping, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is looking for ways to ensure that records professionals have the knowledge and skills to do their jobs effectively and are recognized for their professional accomplishments. One approach we in Federal recordkeeping are undertaking is a review and revision of the NARA records management training program. A related initiative is the development of an optional certification in Federal records management.

The goals of the NARA certification program are to:

- Improve effectiveness of Federal records management
- Give NARA the ability to assess the effectiveness of its training program
- Raise awareness of the importance of records management in the Federal Government
- Increase the level of professionalism of those managing Federal records
- Give NARA and Federal records professionals a set of benchmarks to gauge their professional development

The certification of training program will meet these goals by encouraging Federal records management staff and other interested persons to take a series of NARA training classes that will provide the core records management knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage Federal records. The certification of training program provides a NARA-sanctioned blue print for these individuals to follow to ensure this level of professionalism.

CERTIFICATION OF TRAINING PROGRAM ASSUMPTIONS

- Certification of training will be based on the successful completion of a number of modules within the following four broad subject areas:
 - Creating and maintaining adequate and proper documentation to support agencies' business needs and ensure compliance with Federal laws and regulations and NARA policies and procedures
 - Scheduling records and ensuring their proper disposition
 - Managing electronic records and implementing electronic recordkeeping solutions in support of agencies' business needs
 - Integrating functional analysis and asset and risk management into records management programs and practices

In FY 2004 NARA will determine the number, titles, and subjects of certification-related modules and develop the content for each, linking them to the four subject areas identified

above. NARA anticipates offering the certification-related modules within existing and new records management workshops in FY 2005.

The certification process will be made open to all persons, including Federal employees and contractors. Certification will not be a requirement for employment by the Federal Government or for doing business with the Government.

AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

NARA will provide training in the four subject areas that will provide participants with the information and knowledge that they will need to carry out their records management duties in support of business needs and in accordance with Federal records management laws and regulations. The following subjects are important parts of Federal records management and will be divided among the modules in each of the four subject areas:

Introduction

- Federal records management: definition and components
- Overview of laws and regulations relating to Federal records management
- Key Federal records management concepts
- Key agency records management documents, especially the program directive and comprehensive records schedule (manual)

Records Creation and Maintenance

- Definition of Federal records, nonrecords materials, and personal papers
- Recordkeeping requirements: creation and maintenance of adequate and proper documentation
- Policies and procedures for managing business information and personal papers
- Electronic records management systems, such as records management applications (RMAs) and document management applications (DMAs)
- Design, development, and implementation of information systems to incorporate records management and archival functions
- Policies and procedures for managing electronic mail and word processing documents
- File plans
- Filing and storage procedures
- Permanent records in all media, with an emphasis on permanent electronic records
- Electronic and other special media records, including audiovisual, cartographic and architectural, and micrographic records
- Vital records, including policy, storage, and cycling
- Reference policies and activities

Records Scheduling

- Overview of scheduling process
- Records inventory: Paper-based, electronic, and other special media records
- Disposition instructions that take into account:
 - Agency business needs
 - Government accountability

- Legal rights
- Archival value
- Maximum use of the General Records Schedules (GRS) before drafting agency-specific schedules
- Schedules that include flexible scheduling applications for temporary records
- Unique requirements for scheduling electronic records
- Unscheduled records
- Instructions for completing an SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority
- Examples of approved SF 115s

Schedule Implementation

- Issuance of a comprehensive records schedule (manual) and provision for related training
- Transfer of records to offsite storage, including Federal Records Centers (FRCs) and the use of SF 135s and OF 11s.
- Authorized disposal of temporary records
- Transfer of permanent records to the National Archives, including the use of SF 258s
- Records schedule updates: Requirements and procedures

Asset and Risk Management

- Asset and risk assessment: purpose, frameworks, and procedures
- Assessment of problems
- Risk mitigation strategies
- Identification of priorities
- Resource allocation

Other

- Unauthorized destruction or alienation of Federal records
- Records management program evaluations/inspections
- Records management training: Requirements and procedures
- Resources for solving records management problems

TRAINING PROCESS

Training will be offered through classes delivered nationwide at NARA regional facilities, the National Archives at College Park, and other locations across the country. The classes will be offered through traditional classroom training and eventually electronically via the NARA web site or through other distance learning methods. The course work will ensure coverage of the subject matter in sufficient depth to prepare trainees to take the exam at the conclusion of each class. Course content will include instructional materials and practical exercises for groups and individuals.

Activities will include:

- Carrying out a functional analysis of agency programs
- Conducting an asset and risk analysis on an agency's programs, identifying agency information assets, at-risk programs and business processes and the records that support them

- Developing recordkeeping requirements
- Inventorying records, both records-based and function-based types of inventorying
- Drafting records schedule items
- Completing an SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority, covering one or more of the following:
 - Paper-based records
 - Electronic records
 - Other special media records
 - Administrative records not covered by the GRS
 - Program records
- Completing other records management forms, such as the SF 135, OF 11, SF 258, and NA 14097
- Preparing records for transfer to offsite storage, including an FRC
- Developing an office file plan
- Implementing a records schedule
- Conducting a records management briefing for program managers
- Organizing a campaign to promote the records management program

Subject areas need not be studied in any particular sequence, but participants will be encouraged to follow topics in life cycle order and then take topical classes in other subject areas. This sequence will increase the likelihood that participants will understand the logical progression of the records management process.

EXAMINATIONS

After completing each class, an individual may elect to take an examination on the certification-related modules to demonstrate both understanding and the ability to apply the knowledge learned. The exam will cover the basic concepts presented by the instructor(s) that relate to the modules. It will contain objective questions (e.g., multiple choice and true/false) and practical exercises. The practical exercises will include activities such as drafting records schedule items, completing an SF 115 and other records management forms, and conducting an asset and risk analysis on records systems. If they pass the exam, they will receive a certificate indicating mastery of the modules covered in the course.

Those wishing to be certified must attend the entire class in which the modules supporting one or more of the four subject areas were presented. After completing all of the subject areas modules and passing the associated exams, they will receive a framed NARA records management certificate acknowledging their achievement – successful completion of NARA’s core Federal records management training program.

The examinations will be:

- Administered immediately after the class;
- Completed within a specified timeframe, which will depend on the number and difficulty of the questions and practical exercises; and
- Graded within one week after the class is completed.

SOURCE MATERIALS

The basic background materials to be used for developing classes are:

- 36 CFR, Chapter 12, Subchapter B
- 44 U.S.C., Chapters 29, 31, 33, and 35; and 18 U.S.C. 2071
- ISO 15489
- *Strategic Directions for Federal Records Management* and other supporting documents
- Appraisal and scheduling section of NARA's Business Process Reengineering (BPR) document
- *Disposition of Federal Records* handbook
- Other NARA records management publications
 - *Agency Recordkeeping Requirements* (1995)
 - *Documenting Your Public Service* (2000)
 - *Managing Audiovisual Records* (1996)
 - *Managing the Records of Temporary Commissions* (1989)
 - *Records Management Self-Evaluation Guide* (1995)
 - *Vital Records and Records Disaster Mitigation and Recovery* (1996)

TIMING OF CERTIFICATION IMPLEMENTATION

In FY 2004 NARA will develop curriculum and supporting materials for training modules in new and existing records management courses. NARA will also develop and test the examination processes for FY 2005 implementation. In FY 2005 NARA will start the certification program.

UPDATING CONTENT AND RECERTIFICATION

When NARA issues new policies, procedures, or regulations, it will update the core training classes accordingly. If necessary, NARA will develop additional core classes.

After consultation with adult education experts, NARA will develop a methodology for recertifying individuals. The methodology and supporting program will be deployed in FY 2006.

ONE POSSIBLE RESULT MEASURE

By 2008, 75 percent of the SF 115s, SF 135s and SF 258s submitted and prepared by NARA-trained and certified individuals are accepted on initial submission.

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM INFORMATION

Information on NARA records management class dates and locations will be available in training brochures and on the NARA web site.